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ABSTRACT

In response to a state requirement that Missouri colleges and universities provide assistance to beginning teachers who are graduates of their teacher education programs, Southeast Missouri State University planned and implemented two one-credit graduate courses--one for mentors and one for beginning teachers. The 5-hour workshops met simultaneously for 4 days during the summer session. Topics for the classes were selected to reflect both state requirements for teachers, as reflected in the state-developed performance-based teacher evaluation model, and the perceptions of teachers and principals about the strengths and weaknesses of beginning teachers. Because the classes met simultaneously, the two groups often merged to address certain topics and promote mentoring. The format of the workshop sessions included active participation and formal presentations. Topics and activities included beginning teachers constructing, with the help of their mentors, individual professional development plans; new state certification requirements; and effective teaching and classroom management strategies. Appendices include an outline of findings from a survey of principals' and beginning teachers' perceptions of beginning teachers' performance; the evaluation form used to evaluate the summer workshops; and the daily schedules of the mentor and beginning teacher workshops. (IAH)

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Beginning Teacher/Mentor Teacher Interaction: A Process Approach

presented at
the

Association of Teacher Educators
Annual Conference, 1992

by

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The major response of the state of Missouri to the many national reports on education in the 1980's, is contained in the "Excellence in Education Act of 1985." As stated in the law, it was "enacted to encourage and promote quality in our schools."

Among the topics included in the Act are: testing, discipline, career ladder, minimum salary, and a section titled "Missouri Professional Teacher and Administrator Act." This section outlines steps for teacher certification including entrance and exit testing in the teacher education programs in the state, beginning teacher assistance, and levels of certification which replaced the life certificate which had been issued prior to September 1988, to those completing teacher education programs.

Two parts of this act led to the development of a summer course for beginning teachers and a course for mentors at Southeast Missouri State University in the Summer Session of 1991. First, Missouri colleges and universities are required to provide assistance to beginning teachers who are graduates of their teacher education programs. There are no specific mandates as to the exact type of assistance required. Second, all beginning teachers are to have a mentor during the first year of teaching, a professional development plan, and assistance from a district or building level professional development committee.

The University's response was to plan a one-hour graduate course for beginning teachers which would provide them needed assistance and which might be made a part of their professional development plans. The need for training for teachers who would serve as mentors was also recognized and a syllabus for a class for mentors was developed. As representatives of the University's Elementary and Secondary Education Departments met with representatives from the Office of Field Experiences and Certification to plan the courses and announce the classes to public school people, the idea of having the two classes (Beginning Teacher Assistance and Mentoring) meet together during part of the course was discussed. It appeared that this would provide an opportunity for valuable interaction between beginning and experienced teachers. Thus, a pair of four day (5 hours per day) workshops was developed which earned participants one semester hour of graduate credit upon successful completion of the workshop in

which they were enrolled. How this worked is the focus of a presentation to the ATE Conference in Orlando, Florida, in February 1992.

Other ideas contributed to forming the agenda for the classes. Earlier, Missouri legislation had required all schools to evaluate teachers with a performance based model and ensure that teachers be evaluated with frequency and specificity necessary to assure competence. The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education developed a model which most districts adopted just as it was presented by the state; other districts adopted the model with modifications. When the state provided a model to be used for organizing professional development plans, it followed closely the criteria in the Performance Based Teacher Evaluation Model. Therefore a session of the class dealt with using the model in helping beginning teachers. This model includes four performance areas: instructional process, classroom management, interpersonal relationships, and professional responsibility. Each area lists criteria for evaluation and indicators for each criterion to verify competency. The model also includes a section on steps in the teaching process which are recommended for presentation of a lesson. This model is used in our teacher education program to evaluate student teachers and other field experiences prior to student teaching.

Another activity which contributed to the selection of topics to be included in the class, was a survey of 77 beginning teachers and 54 principals asking for their perception of strengths and weaknesses of beginning teachers. The results of the survey were used to plan the course. The most frequently mentioned items of strengths and weaknesses by both groups are given in Figure IA and IB.

The week's activities were planned to provide beginning teachers with information enabling them to be proactive in addressing the demands faced during that first year and to provide training for teachers who wished to serve as mentors. Beginning teachers could enter into a relationship with their mentor knowing what to expect of them. They would also be armed with information aimed at helping them effectively handle some of the daily demands of teaching. Mentor teachers would explore the unique knowledge and behaviors needed for effective mentoring. Workshop topics were selected and

organized to accomplish just such goals. Because the mentor teachers and beginning teachers met simultaneously, the two groups frequently merged to address topics and allow mentoring to occur enabling the beginning teachers to learn from their more senior counterparts. Mentors were able to begin applying what they learned about the mentoring process as they interacted with new teachers. Participants engaged in outside reading in the textbook for both workshops, **The Intern Teacher Casebook** edited by Judith A. Shulman and Joel A. Colbert, as well as selected journal readings.

To make the five-hour days go quickly, sessions were planned with a mixture of active participation and formal presentations. Because state certification requirements are relatively new and rather complex, a representative of the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education provided explicit information of interest to both experienced and new teachers. She also demonstrated several ways of writing the professional development plans required during the first two years of teaching. Because mentors assist their proteges with this process, this information was of interest and importance to both groups. Later in the week beginning teachers worked with mentor teachers to develop individual professional development plans. This activity provided practical experience for both groups of participants: beginning teachers left with their own real professional development plans and mentor teachers practiced the same mentoring activity required with their own proteges.

Another session was a panel discussion where a principal from an elementary school and a mentor teacher/protege pair from a middle school described their experiences with the mentoring process. The teachers provided a positive role model of the mutual benefits possible in a successful mentoring relationship. The question/answer session which followed enabled participants to explore areas that concerned them. Because the teachers and the principal were from different schools, panel members were able to speak frankly without worrying if delicate issues might offend the other. This sessions was especially beneficial as evidenced by one beginning teacher commenting that she wouldn't have known what to expect of her mentor if the panel members hadn't described their activities. Now she would enter her new job knowing what she should

expect or request.

Classroom management routinely rates first among concerns of beginning teachers. Their principals also cite this as an area frequently causing difficulty for inexperienced teachers. The workshops devoted considerable time to effective teaching and classroom management. After formal presentation to both groups of the discipline information, participants evaluated video models and examined case studies. Teachers were divided into elementary and secondary subgroups for small group discussions of the discipline issues. Again, members of the beginning and mentor teacher groups learned from each other in their interaction.

On the final day each group met separately to address specific topics. Beginning teachers examined two topics: at risk-students and working with parents. However, workshop participants indicated a desire to discuss other issues of interest to them and a free flowing discussion ensued. They shared concerns about how to grade students, how to keep student records, how to make parents a partner in educating their children, etc. The originally planned topics were addressed tangentially but in the greater context of the participants' experiential background. This format proved to be especially satisfying for all involved. Concurrently, mentor teachers explored models of mentoring, systematic observation and conferencing skills.

The workshop concluded with a session which allowed both beginning and mentor teachers to synthesize information from several topics. All participants viewed a video tape of a classroom teaching vignette. Mentor teachers were instructed to watch the tape as if the teacher they viewed was their protege with whom they would have a conference following the viewing. Beginning teachers viewed the tape watching for good or bad examples of effective teaching behaviors which had been presented earlier. Following the tape, one mentor teacher and one beginning teacher role played a mentor/protege conference as if the beginning teacher was the teacher on the tape. The role play participants were "good sports" and played their parts with a dramatic flair. Other workshop participants observed the role play and a group discussion followed. This activity allowed mentor teachers to apply what they had learned about conferencing

and beginning teachers to apply their knowledge of effective teaching plus gain some idea of what to expect from one aspect of the mentoring relationship. Also part of this concluding session was the activity described earlier where beginning teachers developed individual professional development plans with the guidance of mentor teachers.

To qualify for graduate credit from the university, the workshop must contain an evaluation component. Thus, each workshop had a final examination. The exam consisted of a take-home project with assigned and selected essay questions which allowed the participants to synthesize the various aspects of the workshop. Future plans include compiling examination responses into a helpful booklet for beginning and/or mentor teachers.

The results of the evaluation by those participating in the courses indicate that the courses were successful. Both oral and written comments by the particpants were highly complimentary for each workshop and their integration. Rating instrument is Figure 2A. In addition to the positive response locally, the instructors also received requests to do workshops for beginning/mentor teachers elsewhere in the state.

The opportunity for interaction between veteran teachers who wished to serve as mentors and teachers who have just completed the first year can provide a stimulating education environment. The veteran teacher thus has the opportunity to view teaching through the eyes of a novice while the beginning teacher can begin to synthesize the first year and plan for an exciting second year. Teachers helping teachers; a winning combination indeed.

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FIGURE 1A

Survey of Principal Perceptions of Beginning Teachers' Performance

Weaknesses	***Strengths***
Elementary: -Classroom management/discipline, -Conferencing skills with parents -Organizational skills, -Insecurity (afraid of asking for help)	-Enthusiasm -Book knowledge -Techniques/process of teaching
Secondary: -Classroom management/discipline, -Conferencing skills with parents -Organizational skills, -Insecurity (afraid of asking for help)	-Enthusiasm -Subject matter preparation, -Techniques -Accepts suggestions

In your opinion, what personal characteristics of beginning teachers are important to their success?

1. Maturity
2. Common sense
3. Communication skills
4. Flexibility
5. Personality
6. Positive attitude

SURVEY OF PERCEPTIONS OF BEGINNING TEACHERS

WEAKNESSES	STRENGTHS
ELEMENTARY: * DISCIPLINE * PAPERWORK * LACK OF EXTERNAL SUPPORT	SECONDARY: * WILLING TO WORK HARD * MEETING INDIVIDUAL NEEDS * PATIENCE / CARING
SECONDARY: * DISCIPLINE * LIMITED MATERIALS * TIME MANAGEMENT	* SUBJECT KNOWLEDGE * ORGANIZATION * COMMUNICATION * LIKES KIDS

CHARACTERISTICS

ELEMENTARY	SECONDARY
PATIENCE	FLEXIBILITY
FLEXIBILITY	PATIENCE
LIKES KIDS	SOCIAL SKILLS
SENSE OF HUMOR	

FIGURE 2A

N=31

EVALUATION FORM

1. Please rank the various presenters as to the helpfulness of their information and to the quality of their presentation.

DR. SAM GUERRIERO

Circle One

		Mean					
Information Most Helpful	1	(1.14)	2	3	4	5	Least Helpful Information
Quality of Presentation Good	1	(1.14)	2	3	4	5	Poor Quality of Presentation

Comments_____

DR. SANDRA RENEGAR

Circle One

		Mean					
Information Most Helpful	1	(1.17)	2	3	4	5	Least Helpful Information
Quality of Presentation Good	1	(1.21)	2	3	4	5	Poor Quality of Presentation

Comments_____

2. Please rate the topics which were covered in the Workshop.

		Most Helpful Mean				Least Helpful		
1.	Models of Mentoring	1 (1.26)	2	3	4	5	NA	
2.	Schools and the Beginning Teacher	1 (1.36)	2	3	4	5	NA	
3.	Classroom Management	1 (1.32)	2	3	4	5	NA	
4.	Assertive Discipline	1 (1.41)	2	3	4	5	NA	
5.	A Teacher Development Model for Classroom	1 (1.28)	2	3	4	5	NA	
6.	Observation and Conferencing Skills	1 (1.14)	2	3	4	5	NA	
7.	What is Effective Teaching	1 (1.37)	2	3	4	5	NA	
8.	At Risk Students/Work with Parents	1 (2.00)	2	3	4	5	NA	

GLORIA LARIVEE

Circle One

		Mean					
Information Most Helpful	1	(1.10)	2	3	4	5	Least Helpful Information
Good Quality of Presentation	1	(1.14)	2	3	4	5	Poor Quality of Presentation

DR. ROBERT HERRING

Information Most Helpful	1	(1.65)	2	3	4	5	Least Helpful Information
Good Quality of Presentation	1	(1.69)	2	3	4	5	Poor Quality of Presentation

PRINCIPAL, MENTOR, BEGINNING TEACHER

Information Most Helpful	1	(1.45)	2	3	4	5	Least Helpful Information
Good Quality of Presentation	1	(1.59)	2	3	4	5	Poor Quality of Presentation

3. Overall evaluation of the Workshop.

		Mean					
Excellent	1	(1.17)	2	3	4	5	Poor

ASSISTANCE FOR BEGINNING TEACHERS
Daily Schedule

Day 1

8:00-8:30		Registration
8:30-9:00	**	Introductions
9:00-9:30	*	Go over Syllabus Writing Assignment: "What do you feel is the role and responsibility of a mentor teacher?" or "How could a mentor teacher help (or have helped) you?"
9:30-10:00	**	Share and discuss responses to writing assignment
10:00-10:15		Break
10:15-11:45	**	Certification and Professional Development Plans Ms. Gloria Larivee - Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
11:45-12:50	**	MPBTE Dr. Robert Herring - Assistant Director of Field Experiences and Programs, Southeast Missourie State University
12:50-1:00	*	Summary and Assignments 1. "Schools and the Beginning Teacher"

DAY 2

8:00-10:00	*	What is Effective Teaching?
10:00-10:15		Break
10:15-11:45	**	Speakers: Principal: Stanley Smee, West Lane Elementary, Jackson Mentor Teacher: Mary White, Schultz Middle School, Cape Beginning Teacher: Diane Haggard, Schultz Middle School, Cape
11:45-12:00		Break
12:00-12:50	**	Discussion of "Schools and the Beginning Teacher"
12:50-1:00	**	Summary and Assignments 1. Assertive Discipline Articles 2. Intern Teacher Casebook a. Pitfalls of a Peer Relationship b. Reward Systems - the Point 3. "A Teacher Development Model for Classroom Management"

* Beginning and Mentor Teachers separate
** Beginning and Mentor Teachers together

ASSISTANCE FOR BEGINNING TEACHERS
Daily Schedule

Day 3

8:00-9:30	**	Classroom Management 1. How to evaluate discipline models 2. Models a. Behavior Modification b. Reality Therapy (Glasser)
9:30-9:45		Break
9:45-11:15	**	Assertive Discipline 1. Review key points 2. View video 3. Evaluate model using articles
11:15-11:30		Break
11:30-12:30		Analyze case studies 2 groups: Elementary and Secondary
12:30-1:00	**	Discussion: "A teacher Development Model for Classroom Management" Summary and Assignments 1. "Parents as Providers of Linguistic and Social Capital" 2. "Parents' Reactions to Teacher Practices of Parent Involvement"

Day 4

8:00-9:30	*	At-risk Students & Working with Parents
9:30-9:45		Break
9:45-11:00	**	Observation and Conferencing 1. Video 2. Observe review of mentor/protege conferencing 3. Role play mentor/protege conference 4. Discuss role play
11:00-11:15		Break
11:15-12:15		Professional Development Plans 2 Groups: Elementary & Secondary
12:15-1:00	**	Summary Evaluation Certificates

MENTOR TEACHER WORKSHOP
SCHEDULE OF ACITIVITES

DAY 1 — Tuesday

Together:	8:00-8:30	Registration
	8:30-9:00	Introductions
Separate:	9:00-9:30	Explain Syllabus and Writing Assignment
Together:	9:30-10:00	Share viewpoints
	10:00-10:15	Break
	10:15-10:45	Gloria Larivee (DESE) "Professional Development Plan"
	11:45-12:50	Bob Herring "MPBTE"
Separate:	12:50-1:00	Summary & Assignments

1. Intern Teacher Casebook (Chapter 3)
   Books and Things $13.65
2. Synthesis of Research on Mentoring Beginning Teachers (Article Provided)
3. Schools and the Beginning Teacher (Article Provided)

DAY II — Wednesday

Separate:	8:00-10:00	Models of Mentoring

1. Philosophies
2. Research
3. Case Studies

	10:00-10:15	Break
Together:	10:15-11:45	Guest Speakers
	11:45-12:00	Break
	12:00-12:50	Discussion of "Schools and the Beginning Teacher"
	12:00-12:50	Summary and Assignments

1. What Research Really Shows About Assertive Discipline (Article Provided)
2. We Repeat, Let the Buyer Beware: A Response to Cantor (Article Provided)
3. Response to Render, Padilla, and Krank: But Practitioners Say It Works! (Article Provided)
4. A Teacher Development Model for Classroom Management (Article Provided)
5. Intern Teacher Casebook:
   a. Pitfalls of a Peer Relationship (pp. 33-38)
   b. Reward Systems - the Points (pp. 47-58)

DAY III Thursday

Together:	8:00-9:30	Classroom Management
	9:30-9:45	Break
	9:45-11:45	Assertive Discipline
	11:15-11:30	Break
"Separate":		
	11:30-12:30	Analyze Case Studies (Secondary and Elementary Separate)
Together:	12:30-12:50	Discussion "A Teacher Development Model For Classroom Management:
	12:50-1:00	Summary - NO ASSIGNMENTS

DAY IV Friday

Separate:	8:00-9:30	Systematic Observation and Conferencing Skills
	9:30-9:45	Break
Together:	9:45-11:00	Application of Observation and Conferencing Skills
	11:00-11:15	Break
"Separate":		
	11:15-12:15	Professional Development Plan (Secondary and Elementary Separate)
Together:	12:15-1:00	Evaluation and Summary